

# bmj.com news roundup

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## Public Library of Science launches "author pays" model

The Public Library of Science (PLOS) last week launched *PLOS Medicine*, an open access journal that will charge authors rather than readers.

*PLOS Medicine* will be published monthly, primarily as an internet journal (<http://medicine.plosjournals.org>), although print copies will be available at cost price.

It is the second journal from PLOS to challenge the traditional, subscription funded basis of most medical and science journals, such as the *BMJ* and the *Lancet*. The first, *PLOS Biology*, was launched last year.

The new journal finances itself by charging authors \$1500 (£815; €1172) per paper published—a fee authors will be expected to budget for in their initial research applications to funding bodies.

Dr Ian Gibson, chairman of the UK parliamentary select committee on science and technology, which recently carried out an investigation into the funding of science publishing, welcomed the initiative.

"This is an important test case, setting the pace," he told the audience at the journal's launch in London last week. "It's going to be a real example to people out there."

Institutions would have to find the money to fund the dissemination of research if people wanted to get published, he acknowledged. The government's response to his committee's report is due to be published next week.

Lynn Eaton *London*

## United Nations fails to agree on human cloning

A United Nations committee debated an international convention on human cloning at a meeting last week but failed to reach an agreement. Commentators were predicting, as the *BMJ* went to press, that a vote might take place next week.



## Global warming threatens reversal in fight against poverty, says report

"Today, humanity faces the intertwined challenges of obscene levels of poverty and a rapidly warming global climate," states a new report, *Up in Smoke*, a collaborative effort involving many leading international charities and published last week by the New Economics Foundation, an independent, UK based think tank.

The report warns: "Globally several environmental, economic and political trends are coinciding and contributing to rising instability that exposes people and biodiversity to greater risks and vulnerability than ever before."

Most of the people at risk are in poor countries, such as Angola (pictured above). The cumulative number of people affected by disasters rose to two billion in the 1990s, up from 740 million in the 1970s.

"Without a new agenda explicitly focused to reduce vulnerability, we could face a major reversal of human progress," the report continues.

"The likelihood of attaining the millennium development goals—the world's minimum commitment to ending the worst of global poverty, hunger, ill health and disease—will be seriously reduced."

Rhona MacDonald *BMJ*

The meeting debated two proposals on human cloning. The first proposal, from Costa Rica and supported by the United States and more than 60 other countries, recommended a complete ban on both reproductive and therapeutic cloning.

A second proposal from Belgium, co-sponsored by the United Kingdom, suggested a ban on reproductive cloning but would allow UN member countries to make their own decisions on therapeutic cloning. It had the support of about 20 countries. Many countries were still undecided as the *BMJ* went to press.

At the meeting France agreed to support the Belgian proposal and became a co-sponsor, taking the total number of co-sponsors to 22. Botswana,

speaking on behalf of the nations of the Southern African Development Community, said it would not vote in favour of the Costa Rican proposal.

Liz Woodeson, head of the UK government delegation, told the meeting: "We cannot support any attempt to ban or unreasonably restrict cloning for research purposes, known as therapeutic cloning. We are convinced that therapeutic cloning holds enormous promise for new treatments for serious degenerative conditions that are currently incurable."

Susan Mayor *London*

The UK's statement at the UN meeting is accessible from [www.dh.gov.uk/NewsHome/Speeches/SpeechesLibrary](http://www.dh.gov.uk/NewsHome/Speeches/SpeechesLibrary)

## Doctor fabricated research while depressed

A consultant gynaecologist who fabricated research has been reprimanded by the General Medical Council, after a psychiatrist's report indicated that depression had affected his judgment.

Dr Loukas Klentzeris was director of the Cardiff Assisted Reproduction Unit in June 2002 when he submitted an abstract entitled "Correlation between peri-follicular blood flow, as determined by power Doppler and endometrial differentiation in the luteal phase of the menstrual cycle" to the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology.

Dr Klentzeris was to present the paper at the organisation's conference in Vienna, but he cancelled the presentation and withdrew the abstract from the society's website. He had already presented the study's findings to the British Fertility Society in April 2002.

The GMC's professional conduct committee found that none of the 38 women in the trial had taken a blood test described in the abstract. Dr Klentzeris, who has left his job in Cardiff and now lives in Greece, admitted that the data were false but said, "If it was not for the mental state I was in I would never have done something like this."

The committee took no action with respect to Dr Klentzeris's registration.

Owen Dyer *London*

## Law is introduced in US Congress to give access to details of clinical trials

Public access to information on clinical trials and their outcomes would become universal and unfettered in the United States under a proposed law that was introduced in the House of Representatives and the Senate earlier this month.